

**REMARKS**

The Examiner's Action mailed on March 8, 2007, has been received and its contents carefully considered. Additionally attached to this Amendment is a Petition for a One-month Extension of Time, extending the period for response to July 8, 2007.

In this Amendment, Applicants have amended claim 1, and have added claims 18-20. Claims 1, 16 and 17 are the independent claims, and claims 1-20 are pending in the application. For at least the following reasons, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has rejected claim 17 as being obvious over *Fisher et al.* (USP 6,966,959) in view of *Grafenstein* (USP 5,492,338). However, a review of the *Fisher et al.* patent reveals that this patent has a filing date of July 22, 2004. In contrast, Applicants' invention has a US filing date of April 21, 2004, which precedes the filing date of the *Fisher et al.* patent. Thus, it does not appear that *Fisher et al.* is a legally available reference, which meets the requirements of 35 USC, Section 102. It is thus requested that this rejection be withdrawn and that claim 17 be allowed.

Further, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-5 and 11 as being anticipated by *Grafenstein*. It is submitted that these claims are *prima facie* patentably distinguishable over the cited reference for at least the following reasons.

Applicants' claim 1 has been amended to recite that the cylindrical main body is formed as a single cylinder having a center axis. In contrast, the column

hole cover of *Grafenstein* includes double cylinders. That is, the end portion 7 of the seal is folded inwardly and downwardly, and then fit into an annular groove 9 to form a hollow bead 5. As a result, the resulting configuration has double cylinders, that is, a first cylinder defined by the inside wall of the hollow bead 5, and a second cylinder formed by the outside wall of the hollow bead 5. This configuration thus would be difficult to form, since the end 7 needs to be fit within the groove 9. Moreover, if an excessive load were exerted on the bead 5, the end portion 7 could be forced out of the annular groove 9, resulting in a failure of the sealing function. In contrast, Applicants' claimed invention comprises a single cylinder, which facilitates production of the seal. Moreover, Applicants' claimed invention will not fail in the same manner as discussed above with respect to the cited reference. Since the cited reference does not disclose or otherwise suggest Applicants' single cylinder, it is submitted that Applicants' independent claim 1 is *prima facie* patentably distinguishable over the cited reference. It is thus requested that this claim, and the claims dependent therefrom, be allowed, and that these rejections be withdrawn.

The Examiner's Action has also rejected claims 12-15 as being obvious over *Grafenstein*, and has rejected claims 6 and 10 as being obvious over *Grafenstein* in view of *Harkrader et al.* (USP 6,056,297). Moreover, the Examiner's Action has also rejected claims 8 and 9 as being obvious over *Grafenstein* in view of *White* (USP 2,906,552). Because *Harkrader et al.* and *White* do not overcome the above-noted deficiencies of *Grafenstein*, and because

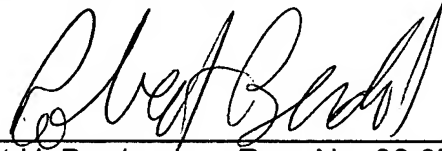
these rejected claims all depend from independent claim 1, it is submitted that these claims are *prima facie* patentably distinguishable over the cited references for at least the same reasons as independent claim 1, from which these claims depend, as well as for the additional features recited therein. It is requested that these claims be allowed and that these rejections be withdrawn.

It is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Such action, and the passing of this case to issue are requested.

Should the Examiner feel that a conference would help to expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to contact the undersigned counsel to arrange for such an interview.

Should the remittance be accidentally missing or insufficient, the Director is hereby authorized to charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 18-0002.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert H. Berdo, Jr. – Reg. No. 38,075  
RABIN & BERDO, PC – Cust. No. 23995  
Telephone: 202-371-8976  
Fax: 202-408-0924

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Date

RHB/vm

AMENDMENT

10/828,503